ISMAEL

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يَأۡتِيۡكَ مِنۡ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيۡقٍ۔ يَاۡتُوۡنَ مِنۡ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيۡقٍ۔ يَاۡتِيۡكَ رِجَالٌ نُّوۡحِيۡۤ اِلَيۡهِمۡ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ۔

People will come to you from every distant track. They will bring you presents by every distant track. Such men will bring you presents, whom We shall direct by revelation from heaven.

SINCERE PRAYER – HALLMARK OF A BELIEVER

ADDRESS BY HAZRAT KHALIFATUL MASIH V(ABA)

WAQF-E-NAU PUBLICATIONS 2018

THE NOBLE CHARACTER OF THE FOUNDER OF ISLAM

KILL YOUR EGO

"Some people's state of conceit and selfishness is such that at one place, an office-bearer was angry with a fellow office-bearer and so, did not come to the mosque for prayers, despite my presence, simply because his relationship was strained with the other office-bearer. The state of egotism and selfishness was to such a degree that although the claim is to have pledged allegiance to Khilafat, but Khilafat is not truly valued. Thus, the Promised Messiahas states that if one undertakes the Bai'at, then one must distance themselves from their own ego and selfishness.

"The Promised Messiahas said, 'Then that person becomes worthy of advancement. But the one who continues to hold on to their ego alongside taking Bai'at, will never receive any grace.' (Malfuzat, Vol.6. p. 173, UK, 1985)
"Although this individual verbally professes belief and may extend greetings with respect, however, due to mutual grudges they do not even care in the slightest that the Khalifa of the time is present and they should be going to the mosque to offer prayers behind him, rather than deciding to come or not come to the mosque based on any other office-bearer. All the meanwhile, that individual himself is also an office-bearer. Thus, if this is the state of a person, then there is no need for such an individual to be an Ahmadi.

"Thus, 'selling of one's life' means that one should adopt humbleness and humility. It requires one to annihilate one's ego and to eradicate one's ego and selfishness."

(Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih Vaa, Friday Sermon delivered at Baitur Rahman Mosque, Silver Spring, Maryland, USA, on 2 November 2018)

FROM THE EDITOR

While it is indeed God's grace and mercy that we belong to the community of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah[as], it is not sufficient to merely claim allegiance to the Jamaat and not do anything otherwise. This is something Huzoor has reiterated in his Friday Sermons, classes with Waqifeen and various other occasions.

The world we live in has us asking many questions: *"What is the purpose of life?" "How can we attain peace of mind?" "How do we see that we are truly successful?" "Is there a higher purpose of being on this planet?"* We can all agree that the answers to all of these can be found in Islam Ahmadiyyat.

However, we should remember that as the world progresses, its quest for enlightenment and thirst for true wisdom also increases. While many may argue that people are drifting away from religion, on the flip-side we see many people asking more and more questions about issues we possess the answer to.

Until we – those who have sacrificed their lives for the cause of Islam – do not ponder over the significance of our existence, the reality of man's purpose on earth and our responsibilities as human beings, religious people, Ahmadi Muslims and believers in God's final Jamaat, we cannot truly attain the "peace of mind" we are all in search of.

Time and again, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih reminds us that the unrest in the world is not because we lack any material wealth, rather it is a result of spiritual unrest the majority of people are facing. And why is there spiritual unrest? Our minds have evolved to such a level where, by now, we should have acquired all the knowledge needed to recognise our Creator, but the majority of people have still not made up their minds about what it is they want and what it is they need. Needless to say, the world awaits our message to reach them in the most befitting manner!

We – believers in Muhammad Rasulullah[sa], his Messiah[as] and God's final Jamaat – have all the answers. Thousands of pages worth of answers in the Promised Messiah's[as] writings, thousands of sermons and addresses by the Khulafa spanning approximately hundreds of thousands (if not millions) of pages, and to further help the young minds of today, videos scattered over the web, all answering the questions we have.

It would take a long time to go through all of this at once. But pick up something: a book, a tablet, your mobile phones, and start from somewhere. The world hunts for answers aimlessly, but belonging to a people that believe they have all the answers should surely be a means of expediting our search.

Perhaps the goal shouldn't be to end our search quickly. The real goal should be to start...

WELCOME TO

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بِسۡمِ اللّٰہِ الرَّحۡمٰنِ الرَّحِیۡمِ

وَ الَّذِیۡنَ جَاہَدُوۡا فِیۡنَا لَنَہۡدِیَنَّہُمۡ سُبُلَنَا ؕ وَ اِنَّ اللّٰہَ لَمَعَ الۡمُحۡسِنِیۡنَ

"And as for those who strive in Our path – We will surely guide them in Our ways. And verily Allah is with those who do good." *(Surah al-Ankabut, Ch.29: V.70)*

With regard to this verse,
Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih II[ra], says:

"In this verse, God Almighty gives hope to mankind; the message he conveys to them is such as can bring their dead hearts to life and raise them from lows and elevate them to highs. The fact is that many failures are committed due to the dismay man puts himself in believing that he has no chance of further excelling [spiritually]. However, Allah states that this notion is entirely incorrect. 'Whoever struggles to attain My love and to be at one with Me, I shall ceaselessly show to them those paths that reach Me. The condition, however, is that the struggles should not be according to one's own criteria, rather they should be in accord with My prescribed principles,' which the words 'Fi-na' [in Our way] suggest."

(Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, Tafsir-e-Kabir, Vol. 7, p. 692)

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَّعَلٰى اٰلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلٰى اِبْرَاهِيْمَ وَعَلٰى اٰلِ اِبْرَاهِيْمَ اِنَّكَ حَمِيْدٌ مَّجِيْدٌ

اَللّٰهُمَّ بَارِكْ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَّعَلٰى اٰلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلٰى اِبْرَاهِيْمَ وَعَلٰى اٰلِ اِبْرَاهِيْمَ اِنَّكَ حَمِيْدٌ مَّجِيْدٌ

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ، قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:

"إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَجَاوَزَ لِأُمَّتِي عَمَّا وَسْوَسَتْ أَوْ حَدَّثَتْ بِهِ أَنْفُسَهَا، مَا لَمْ تَعْمَلْ بِهِ أَوْ تَكَلَّمْ".

Hazrat Abu Huraira, Allah be pleased with him, narrated that the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, said:

"Allah forgives my followers those [evil deeds] their souls may whisper or suggest to them, as long as they do not act [on it] or speak."

(Sahih al-Bukhari, Kitab al-Iman wa al-Nudhur)

WE ARE ALWAYS IN NEED OF GOD

Your plans cannot succeed without the help of God. If you do not seek His assistance, and do not make it your rule to seek strength from Him, you will never achieve anything and will die in immense sorrow. Do not wonder why other nations seem to succeed, while they are not even aware of the existence of God who is your Perfect and Mighty Lord. The answer is that they have been subjected to the trial of the world on account of their abandoning God. At times, He opens the doors of the world to a person who forsakes Him and seeks the joys and pleasures of the world and runs after its riches, in order to try him. Such a one is wholly bereft and deprived in respect of religion. In the end, he dies with his mind devoted wholly to the world and is cast into an eternal hell.

(Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad[as], Noah's Ark, pp. 39-40)

SINCERE PRAYER - HALLMARK OF A BELIEVER

Address By Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (Aba)
At The Concluding Session Of The Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya Ijtema 2018

After reciting *Tashahhud*, *Ta'awwuz* and *Surah Al-Fatihah*, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V(aba) said:

"This year, Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya UK made Salat their theme. I hope and expect that, at every level, the administration of Khuddamul Ahmadiyya will have made a concerted effort to encourage the Khuddam and Atfal regarding Salat and explaining its utmost importance. However, the Majlis and its office bearers can only draw attention towards Namaz up to a point, and, in the end, it is up to every individual who calls himself a Muslim to realise the true status and significance of Namaz. This is the most basic form of worship, which Allah the Almighty has Himself made obligatory upon each person, five times a day. Consequently, it is up to each individual Muslim to recognise the supreme value of Salat and the unlimited power of prayer.

Moreover, we Ahmadi Muslims, claim to have accepted the Imam of the Age, who was sent according to the command of Allah the Almighty and according to the prophecies of the Holy Prophet(sa), to manifest the magnificence of Islam to the world and to revive the original Islamic teachings that had long been forgotten. Accordingly, if we claim to have accepted him, we must also accept that Namaz is a fundamental and inherent obligation placed upon us by our religion, and that we must never be neglectful of our prayers, rather we must give them full priority at all times.

If we look at the Word of Allah, at the very beginning of Surah Al-Baqarah, Allah the Almighty says that the Holy Quran has been sent as a 'guidance for the righteous'. It then states:

الَّذِيْنَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْغَيْبِ

Here, the Quran says that true believers are those who ***'believe in the unseen'*** - meaning they accept Allah the Almighty as that Being Who has knowledge of the unseen. Thereafter it states:

وَ يُقِيْمُوْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ

This literally means that believers are those who ***'observe prayer'***. Thus, Allah the Almighty has Himself decreed that each Muslim must offer Salat each and every day. This injunction is as applicable today, as it ever was in the past. Indeed, the Holy Quran's teachings are both timeless and universal.

In this era, in which we have had the great fortune to have accepted the Promised Messiah(as), we must also recognise that taking his Bai'at can only prove of benefit if it leads us to act upon the commands of Allah the Almighty. Conversely, if we are negligent in our religious duties, we will have no right to assert that our acceptance of the Promised Messiah(as) has brought about a spiritual revolution within us or has enabled us to follow the true teachings of Islam. Rather, our acceptance of him will merely be a hollow and meaningless claim uttered by our tongues.

The importance of observing *Salat* is reiterated by verse 239 of Surah *Al-Baqarah*, where Allah the Almighty states:

حٰفِظُوۡا عَلَی الصَّلَوٰتِ وَ الصَّلٰوۃِ الۡوُسۡطٰی * وَ قُوۡمُوۡا لِلّٰہِ قٰنِتِیۡنَ

"Watch over Prayers, and the middle Prayer, and stand before Allah submissively."

Here, the Quran states that it is necessary to 'watch over prayers' and particularly commands that we should be careful in observing the 'middle prayer'. 'Watching over prayers' means to be on guard against laziness or neglect when it comes to *Salat*. The verse also instructs us to stand before Allah with complete and utter humility and in a state of complete devotion to Him.

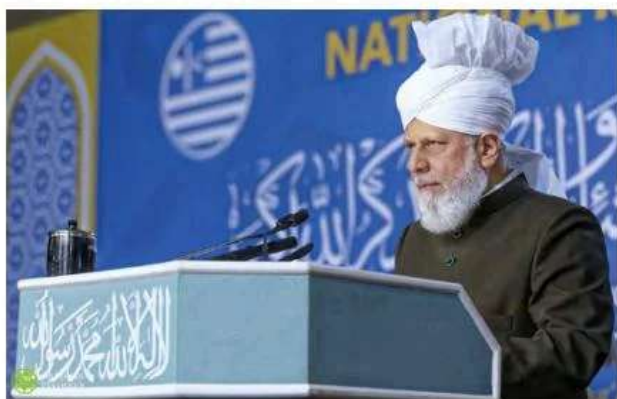
This command of Allah the Almighty is extremely pertinent in this era, because throughout the world, people are busy with work, school, colleges or other daily activities and so a special effort is required to safeguard Salat. In terms of a 'normal' daily routine, in which people go to work or to school, the middle prayers are *Zuhr* and *Asr* and these are the two prayers that many people are careless about and fail to observe. Thus, the Holy Quran has specifically warned that we must never display weakness when it comes to the obligatory prayers or let our worldly activities take precedence over our religious obligations.

Regarding this verse, I also wish to mention that it should not be assumed that the 'middle prayer' refers only to either *Zuhr* or *Asr*. In today's world, people of all ages, including many youngsters, stay up late studying, or wasting time in immoral or wasteful things such as aimlessly surfing the internet, watching films or TV, scrolling endlessly on their phones or tablets or sending messages late into the night. As a result, they fail to wake up for Fajr and so due to their routine, Fajr actually becomes the middle prayer for them. Thus, the middle prayer is whichever prayer is at risk of being forsaken as a result of worldly or material pursuits.

In the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad(sa), people were at their busiest in the afternoon, and so the Holy Prophet(sa) said that for them Asr was the middle prayer. However, in today's world, people have different routines and so the middle prayer can be any of the five prayers. As I have said, for many people, Fajr is now actually the 'middle prayer' because they fail to offer it on time, as they go to bed very late. Thus, you should develop the habit of going to bed early, and if that is not possible, you must still go to bed with a firm intention and determination that you will wake up for Fajr, no matter how tired you are.

Further, whenever possible, even if you have to make an extra effort, you should offer your prayers in congregation at your local mosque or Salat Centre because this is the instruction of God Almighty for men. A man who offers his prayers at home without a genuine reason or excuse will not be the recipient of Allah's pleasure or rewards.

Remember, the Holy Prophet(sa) said that the reward for offering your prayers in congregation is at least twenty-seven times greater compared to offering Salat on your own.

Such narrations make us realise how gracious, generous, merciful and benevolent Allah the Almighty is. Whilst the punishment for a sin is equivalent and proportionate to the offence committed, when it comes to virtue and good deeds, Allah the Almighty often rewards us many times over. Hence, it is your duty to take benefit of the great mercy of our Gracious God by joining together in our mosques for congregational prayers and bowing down before Him, beseeching His forgiveness for your sins and weaknesses.

I have said many times before that if all the office bearers from our Jama'at and auxiliary administrations were regular in offering Namaz in congregation, the attendance at our mosques would immediately rise by around 60 or 70 per cent. So, I hereby reiterate that all members of the Majlis-e-Amila, whether at a national, regional or local level have a duty to set a positive example with regards offering congregational prayers.

Further, whilst the theme of this year's Ijtema is 'Salat', never think that this is your objective or theme just for this one year; rather, you must maintain your focus upon Namaz and consider it to be an integral part of your daily lives until the day you die. Given this, if the theme of the Ijtema changes next year, do not think that it means you no longer need to focus on Salat and that you should turn your attention to the new theme alone. In fact, this year's theme of Salat was devised to ensure that every single Khadim and Tifl is made well-aware of the unique importance of congregational prayers throughout one's life.

As I said, this is not a matter just for today, this week, month or year; rather, the five daily prayers should remain your constant companions every single day for the rest of your lives. Anyway, I hope and pray that you will have truly benefited from this year's programme and realised the true value and crucial importance of prayers. To those of you who have improved and benefitted, I am pleased that you have taken the matter seriously and endeavoured to progress. However, you must not now relax and be satisfied with whatever improvement has been made so far; rather, you must remain continually focused upon increasing the sincerity of your worship of Allah and offering Namaz with full concentration and with a firm conviction that Allah the Almighty listens to those who earnestly supplicate before Him.

If there are some who have not made a resolute effort to improve their standards of worship over the past year they should not waste another day. Now is the time to make a firm and conscious decision to improve. Now is the time to start climbing that spiritual ladder that takes us towards our Creator. Allah the Almighty has Himself informed us of the unparalleled benefits of prayer and worship. Thus, in chapter 29, verse 46 of the Holy Quran, Allah the Almighty says:

اِنَّ الصَّلٰوۃَ تَنۡهٰی عَنِ الۡفَحۡشَآءِ وَ الۡمُنۡکَرِ ؕ وَ لَذِکۡرُ اللّٰهِ اَکۡبَرُ ؕ

"Surely, prayer restrains one from indecency and manifest evil and remembrance of Allah is indeed the greatest virtue."

The Arabic word used here is الۡفَحۡشَآءِ *(Al-Fahshaa)* which is translated as 'indecency', however the true scope of this word is far wider. Just some of the other meanings of this Arabic word include, 'excessive', 'immoderate', 'exorbitant' and 'enormously foul'. Additional meanings include, 'immoral', 'lewd', 'obscene', 'a sin or crime', 'adultery' or 'fornication'.

In this verse, it also says that Namaz saves you from الۡمُنۡکَرِ *(Al-Munkar)* and whilst this has been translated as 'manifest evil', it also means 'any action that is disapproved, deemed or declared bad', 'hateful', 'foul', 'hideous' and 'unseemly' amongst others. As you can see, it is clear that both the Arabic words mentioned have many negative connotations and meanings and so this verse is a mighty testament to the power of prayer and of Salat. Allah the Almighty has guaranteed that those people who offer their prayers in a timely and proper way, will be saved from a whole host of immoral, unchaste and evil behaviours.

We are living in an era, where at every turn, we are exposed to indecency, immorality and harmful vices that seek to lure mankind away from virtue and drag them towards sin. More than ever before, it is necessary for a believer to protect himself from the countless evils and immoralities that pervade society. For this, we must use that method which

Allah the Almighty has Himself given us, which is to bow down before Him five times each day. This is the path to salvation and those who walk upon it are not only saved from Allah's Wrath, but are the recipients of His love, His grace and His great rewards.

Having given some Quranic references, I shall now present a few sayings of the Holy Prophet(sa) which further illustrate the unique importance of Namaz. Once a person approached the Holy Prophet(sa) and asked him:

O Messenger of Allah, tell us that act that can take us to heaven and save us from the fire?

In response, the Holy Prophet(sa) said:

You must worship Allah according to the way He has taught, you must not associate any partners with Him, you must offer Namaz, pay Zakat and treat your kindred lovingly. This is the means to entering heaven.

On another occasion, the Holy Prophet(sa) said that negligence in Salat brings a person near to associating partners with Allah, that is Shirk, and close to a state of disbelief. Unquestionably, this solemn warning of the Holy Prophet(sa) is enough to instil great fear in the hearts of any sincere Muslim.

Another Hadith of great importance, and which shows the value of Namaz, is one that we have been taught since childhood, and so I am sure that many of the Khuddam and Atfal present will have heard it many times. Once, the Holy Prophet(sa) asked his companions that if a stream passed by someone's home and they bathed in it five times daily would there be any dirt left on such a person? The answer of the Companions was, of course, that such a person would be fully cleansed and purified.

The Holy Prophet(sa) said that, in the same way, offering Namaz five times a day spiritually cleanses and purifies us and saves us from all forms of evil and transgression.

Further, the Holy Prophet(sa) said that when a child reaches the age of seven they should be told by their parents to offer Namaz and when a child reaches the age of ten, they should be instructed firmly if necessary. This shows the importance of becoming regular in Salat from childhood and emphasises that Namaz is the foundation stone upon which children should build their future lives.

Hence, even the younger members of Atfal should try to offer their prayers with concentration and to build a relationship with Allah from an early age. Anyway, if we profess to have accepted the Holy Prophet(sa) and his devoted servant, the Promised Messiah(as), all of us must ensure that we are diligent in offering the five daily prayers. As I said before, do not fall into the trap of thinking that 'Salat' is a theme for just one year; rather, it should remain the theme underpinning your entire lives.

Whatever age you are, and whether you live into your seventies, eighties or even beyond, Salat is the one thing that a true Muslim can never do without. Without it, nothing of value can ever be achieved. There is no excuse that justifies the neglect of Salat.

Indeed, the Promised Messiah(as) has narrated an incident from the time of the Holy Prophet(sa) when some people, who had accepted Islam, came to the Holy Prophet(sa) and stated that they were so busy in their working lives, that it was very difficult to worship at least 5 times daily and so they sought permission to be excused from the demands of Salat.

Upon this, the Holy Prophet(sa) remarked:

Take heed, if there is no prayer, there is nothing. Faith without worship is no faith at all.

As I have said, Namaz is, and will always remain, a core tenet of Islam. Indeed, after Kalima Tayyabah, it is the second foundational pillar of Islam. Consequently, if we believe in Islam, we must act upon its teachings, otherwise, our acceptance is rendered hollow and futile. This is the stark truth that lies before us.

I shall now present some excerpts from the writings of the Promised Messiah(as) which shine a light upon the true significance of Salat and how it should be performed. On one occasion,

the Promised Messiah(as) said:

It is necessary to offer Namaz and sincere prayer is the hallmark of a believer. The best way of deriving the benefits of prayer is through Namaz.

Speaking about the way in which a person should perform prayers, the Promised Messiah(as) said:

You must perform Salat in the best possible manner. When you are in the standing posture, your whole appearance must reflect the fact that you are standing before God in complete humility.

The Promised Messiah(as) further stated:

When you bow before Him in Salat, it must be a reflection of the submission of your hearts. When you fall prostrate, your manner must be that of a person who is inspired by the fear of God. And pray a lot for your spiritual, as well as material success.

At another instance, the Promised Messiah(as) said:

You should offer Namaz in the same way that the Holy Prophet(sa) did. Regarding his prayers, Hazrat Ayesha (ra) and many other companions testified that his prayers were offered in a state of extreme anguish and with complete sincerity and humility.

The Promised Messiah(as) also spoke of his regret that many people offered their prayers quickly without due respect or attention. Speaking about people who pray in this way, the Promised Messiah(as) said:

These are not the prayers of the Holy Prophet(sa) or of his companions. Rather, they are the supplications of people who are trying to release themselves from the prayer as hurriedly as possible. Whilst in prostration, it is as if they are only there to briefly bump their heads onto the ground and they appear more like chickens pecking at seeds. This is entirely wrong. Our prostrations should be made with complete sincerity and respect.

On another occasion, the Promised Messiah(as) said:

You must offer Namaz with extreme care and diligence and you must understand its meaning.

At another time, the Promised Messiah(as) said that we must pray with a pure heart and ensure that our supplications are completely respectful and that each individual element of Salat is performed carefully and with deep concentration. Speaking regretfully at the state of worship of certain people, the Promised Messiah(as) said:

Some people offer their prayers as though they are discharging a tax that is a great burden upon them. Thus, they offer Namaz with disgust, even though Namaz is that great thing that if offered with sincerity and devotion increases joy, love and comfort. Yet, many people's prayers are those that are not fervently offered and therefore are neither a means of pleasure, nor joy and actually have the opposite effect.

At another time, the Promised Messiah(as) said:

I have instructed the members of my Jama'at that they should not pray in a way that is devoid of fervency and devotion to Allah and without true humility; rather, they should offer prayers that are earnest, sincere and they should open their hearts in a state of complete submission to Allah. This is the way they can attain true pleasure and delight from their worship.

Remember, that Allah the Almighty has used the word, 'Iqaa-matus-Salat' for prayer, or Namaz. What is meant by Iqaa-matus-Salat'? It means the establishment and observance of prayer. That is the when the time for prayer arrives, it should be given precedence over all other activities or engagements. And try to offer it in congregation. A person can never obtain nearness to Allah the Almighty until he establishes prayer.

The Promised Messiah(as) has also explained the meaning of Iqaamatus-Salat' in another way and said:

The Holy Quran has given the instruction of 'Aqeemus-salat' - establishing sincere prayer - because if a person's concentration is diverted, the objectives of Salat cannot be achieved.

However, those who observe the prayer properly find that their spiritual state is raised and they are able to reach a level where they are completely immersed in a state of submission whilst offering their prayers.

Here, the Promised Messiah(as) has made it clear that those who fail to offer their prayers with due concentration cannot attain the real purpose of Salat. If a person stands for prayer but his mind wanders, and his concentration diverts to something apart from the worship of Allah, the objectives of Salat will remain unfulfilled. Conversely, those people who pray with full attentiveness and eliminate everything else from their mind whilst engaged in prayer, are the ones who derive real spiritual benefit from prayer.

They are the ones who are able to offer their prayers in a state of complete submission to God Almighty. For prayers to be accepted, sincerity and humility are a prerequisite. Indeed, the Holy Quran has said that some people's prayers prove to be a source of great harm for them and are the means of their destruction.

You may wonder how it is possible that the prayers of some people are a means of their ruin? The Promised Messiah(as) has answered this question. He wrote that some people pray but without sincerity. Their prayers are devoid of all spirituality and, as a result, they fail to come under the Divine shade protecting believers from wrongdoing. Instead of unlocking the doors to a spiritual sanctuary, their insincere and hollow supplications are rejected and thrown back at them. In fact, their empty prayers are cursed and will hurt and harm them, rather than comfort and aid them.

The Promised Messiah(as) said:

Namaz is the means for us to be freed from all afflictions and wrongdoing. As it states in chapter 11 verse 115 of the Holy Quran:

اِنَّ الْحَسَنٰتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّاٰتِ

'...Surely, good works drive away evil works'
And so Namaz is the means of purification and to be saved from all transgressions. The Promised Messiah(as) said:

The 'good works' referred to in this verse means Namaz, but nowadays there are many people who offer their prayers but are still considered as wrongdoers and deceivers. This is because their prayers are empty and such prayers do not lead to righteousness but are a means of destruction.

At another place, the Promised Messiah(as) has spoken about the importance of understanding the meaning of the prayers, and says:

If you wish to derive true joy and contentment from prayers then do not just repeat the words of the prayer like a parrot. Just using your tongue does not bring blessings.

Rather, you must recite the prayers of the Holy Quran and of the Holy Prophet(sa)

sincerely from your heart and with a true understanding of what they mean.

He further said:

When you observe the prayer, besides the prescribed supplications taught by the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet(sa), you should set forth your own supplications in your own respective languages so that your hearts may be moved by humility and sincerity when you bow or when you prostrate, that is Sajdah. Similarly, when you are in the sitting or standing position you should pray in your own language as well.

At another time, the Promised Messiah(as) said:

You should make a firm intention to offer Namaz. With complete determination, you should stand for prayer and pray with such intense concentration that your prayers are a means of joy and comfort to you.

To develop such pleasure from your prayers it is necessary that, apart from the obligatory five prayers, you should also offer voluntary Nawafil prayers regularly.

I have quoted various writings of the Promised Messiah(as) which remind us of the great importance of observing our five daily prayers in a timely fashion and attentively. Thus, all Khuddam and Atfal must prioritise their prayers and offer them with concentration and respect.

As I said earlier, the theme of Salat is not a theme for just a single year, rather if you wish to have a blessed and prosperous life, Namaz is the golden key that you must never let go of. If you want to be a true believer and to fulfil the conditions of your Bai'at, you must be regular in offering your five daily prayers with sincerity. If you wish to develop a personal relationship with Allah the Almighty you must bow down in worship before Him as He has prescribed. Unless, you focus your energies upon prayer and worship, Allah the Almighty will not be satisfied or pleased with you.

If you ignore your duty to worship Allah and focus upon material interests, you may be successful in attaining worldly pleasures, but remember that a true Muslim focuses upon the permanence of the next life and not just the fleeting pleasures of this temporary worldly existence.

So, the only solution and the only way is prayer.

If we are regular in Namaz and if we pray with sincerity then our lives will be worthy of success. According to the promise of Allah the Almighty, we will be freed from the shackles of wrongdoing, evil and immoral behaviour.

We will be those who fulfil both the rights of our Creator and of one another.

We will be those who spread love, tolerance and compassion amongst society.

We will be true Muslims.

Rather than seeing our prayers thrown back at and proving a curse for us, they will instead lift us towards our Creator and be the means of increasing blessings in our lives.

Thus, every Ahmadi Muslim, whether a child, a teenager, an adult or an elder, must constantly focus upon Namaz and the worship of Allah and strive to be amongst those whose prayers are pleasing to Allah the Almighty.

In the end, I would like to present another excerpt from the writings of the Promised Messiah(as) regarding the incomparable blessings of prayer. The Promised Messiah(as) said:

Prayer is the greatest means of attaining the blessings and grace of Allah. The most vital characteristics for offering prayers are that they are offered in a state of complete humility, with fervency and by opening up your heart before Allah.

He says:

Such prayers offered with meekness, deep emotion and in a state of complete helplessness are those that attract the Grace and Mercy of God and reach their ultimate objective through acceptance by Him.

Thus, when you pray with humility, desperation and in a way that your prayers emanate from deep within your heart, it draws the blessings of Allah the Almighty towards you.

With all my heart, I pray that Allah the Almighty enables all of you to offer Namaz in this way.

May our prayers be filled with emotion, sincerity and deep anguish seeking the love and nearness of Allah the Almighty. May our hearts melt before your Lord when we bow down before Him. May we pray with such intense humility that every fibre of our being lies in a state of submission before Allah the Almighty.

Such heartfelt prayers will surely be accepted and take us towards our true purpose and objective, which is to gain the love of Allah the Almighty. If we are able to worship in this way, we will not only be fulfilling the rights owed to Allah the Almighty, but we will also be fulfilling the rights of mankind. For it is impossible that a person who has attained the pleasure and nearness of Allah the Almighty remains negligent in fulfilling the rights of His Creation.

And it was to fulfil these two purposes, of connecting man with God Almighty and to draw the attention of mankind towards fulfilling the rights of one another, for which the Promised Messiah(as) was sent in this era.

If we are able to pick up the spiritual lantern that the Promised Messiah(as) has placed before us by fulfilling these twin objectives we will undoubtedly gain the attention of the world and people will be increasingly inclined towards us.

Only then will we be fulfilling our duties to spread the true message of Islam and bring others towards it. This is the great task and mission which Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya should accept wholeheartedly.

You should be the ones who work day and night to refute those who defame Islam's name or who make false allegations against Islam. You should be the ones who are at the forefront of spreading the enlightened teachings of Islam far and wide, so that we come to see that blessed day where the world unites under the banner of the Holy Prophet Muhammad(sa).

You should be the ones who fulfil your pledge of being ever ready to sacrifice everything for the sake of your faith.

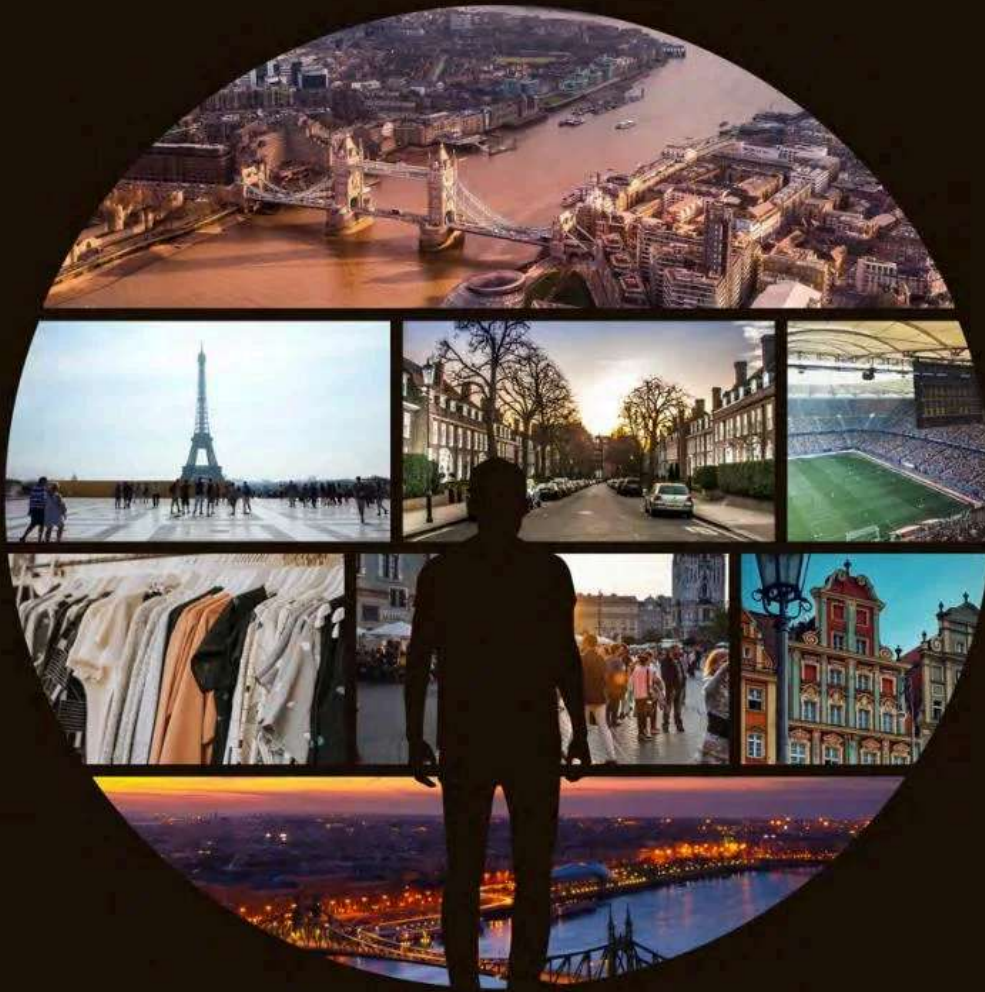
Only then will you be playing your role in bringing about a spiritual revolution in the world by bringing mankind towards the worship of Allah the Almighty. Only then will we see the dark clouds of today begin to part and be replaced by an emergent blue sky. Only then will we witness that momentous era when the Shariat of Allah the Almighty prevails across the world.

For this great task, you must be ever ready and ever willing.

Until your last breath, you should consider this the primary task and objective of your lives.

As I said before, this is not the work of one year or a few days, rather this task shall remain with you every day that you walk upon this earth.

It is the single greatest purpose of your lives and you should recognise this from a young age.

May Allah the Almighty enable all of us to live our lives accordingly and may He continue to bless Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya in all respects. Ameen. Now, join me in silent prayer."

LIVE AS FREE MEN AND FREE WOMEN

"I have observed that when weak-natured people in their travels in England and Europe observe the entertainments there, they experience extreme mental inferiority. They feel as though that is the life to live. 'We suffered materialistically for no reason! What have we earned? Nothing! These people know how to live, they know how to wear clothes and make an appearance. What beautiful streets! What beautiful houses and what beautiful beaches! Coasts, parks, gardens; This is the life!'...

"They feel as though they wasted their entire lives. This is the impression they get. But why do they get this impression? This is because they know of no higher values which can satisfy them...

"Allah says that we should replace such [materialistic] values with better values and endeavour to increase our pace in repentance and seeking the pleasure of Allah. When our attention is solely for our Lord and for attaining His pleasure, these pursuits will lose their appeal...

"The reason I have touched on this subject is so that you can live your lives as free men and free women, that is, free from the pleasures of the world and those who submit to Allah."

(Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih IV[rh], Friday Sermon delivered at Masjid Aqsa, Rabwah, 22 October 1982)

ABID KHAN SAHIB'S

LONDON DIARY

SPRING 2018

Only small portions of the diaries written by Abid Waheed Khan sahib are included in Ismael.

www.alislam.org/library/topics/diary/ to derive maximum benefit from these diaries

RETURN FROM SPAIN

On 24 April 2018, I had the opportunity to meet Huzoor after a period of three weeks, as he had just returned from a visit to Spain the evening before.

Most graciously, Huzoor permitted me to sit with him for over two hours that afternoon, as he worked through the various files of letters that lay on his desk. Even after I had presented my report for the day, Huzoor continued to let me sit with him and I am sure it was because Huzoor knew the feelings in my heart.

A CASE OF NINE DELIVERIES!

During the Mulaqat, I shared some feedback I had received to a diary I had written a few weeks before about the UK Jamaat's National Peace Symposium.

An Ahmadi from Ghana had written:
"Abid sahib, your diary is pregnant with new information."

It was a turn of phrase I had never heard before and one that made me laugh.

After hearing the comment, Huzoor said:
"You should learn English from the Ghanaians! They use their native phrases in English."

As I concluded presenting some comments, Huzoor smiled and said:
"You have shared the comments of nine individuals and so it can be said you had nine successful deliveries today!"

I laughed a lot and Huzoor also laughed with that beautiful and radiant smile of his.

I was glad I had shared the comment of the Ghanaian Ahmadi as Huzoor had remembered it and enjoyed it.

"PHIR, ALLAH KE SAATH BAATEN KI"

During the Mulaqat, Huzoor also mentioned an article published in Al Hakam the week before in which Huzoor had given an interview narrating his emotions and recollections of when he was elected Khalifatul Masih in 2003.

It was a beautiful and touching interview in which the readers received a very personal insight into those days when Huzoor's life was transformed forever.

I told Huzoor that I had found one passage particularly emotional in which Huzoor had informed that he had spent time alone with the blessed body of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IVrh in a room adjacent to the Mahmood Hall.

Upon this, Huzoor remarked:
"It was not mentioned in the Al Hakam article but initially there was a security guard present who was on duty standing near the coffin in which Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IVrhlay, however I told him to leave because it was not possible for me to open my heart before God or to express my feelings and emotions in front of anyone else. After he left, I then spoke with Allah the Almighty."

I found Huzoor's last remark to be particularly beautiful and poignant. In Urdu, Huzoor said

"Phir, Allah ke saath baaten ki"

and it was a reflection of how in those few days of desperation and devastation, Huzoor turned only and always towards Allah the Almighty alone.

UNNECESSARY HASTE

With the Grace of Allah, during those days, one afternoon I received a box of chocolates from Huzoor. It so happened that when I opened the box, I opened it the wrong way. Hence, the chocolates were faced down when opened and fell to the ground.

Given that they were a gift from Huzoor, I did not wish for them to be wasted and so I quickly gathered them up and returned them to the tray. The next day I told Huzoor about how I had dropped and then retrieved the chocolates.

Upon this, Huzoor said:
"Did you not look at which side you were opening the box from? You were trained as a lawyer and lawyers are meant to be meticulous!"

Upon this, I responded by saying:
"Huzoor, I am no longer a lawyer! That seems a different life to me!"

Hearing my response, Huzoor said:
"Yes, you are no longer a lawyer but you are in the Press Office and even good media people need to be meticulous!"

I nodded knowing that Huzoor was right.

Thereafter, Huzoor said:
"I have observed that it is your nature to do things in a hurry. For example, if you stand or sit you will do it suddenly but you should try to develop the habit of being calm in all matters and not rushing."

Again, Huzoor was absolutely right. Whilst I like to think of myself as quite calm, it is also very true that I can easily get flustered and nervous as well.

Advising me further, Huzoor said:
"Pehla kadam aaraam say liya karo aur phir dhor lagao."

Meaning:
"Take your first step slowly and then run fast."

It was beautiful advice and a means of guiding me not only in my personal habits but also in my work. That if given a task, I should take some time to assess and understand the issue and once prepared work quickly and diligently.

A SIP OF WATER

Certainly, if I want to become calmer, I need look no further than the blessed example of Huzoor himself.

Unquestionably, the most composed and collected person I have ever met is Huzoor.

For example, one morning in late 2017, Huzoor was engaged in daftari Mulaqats at the Fazl Mosque.

Later in the morning, Huzoor came out of his office and into the Mahmood Hall where he met a group of Khuddam who had travelled from Norway.

During the meeting, Huzoor laughed, smiled, showed great affection to the Khuddam and answered all of their questions.

I later found out that moments before he met the Norwegian Khuddam, Huzoor had received some troubling and upsetting news in which an Arab Ahmadi, who had worked for the Jamaat for a long time and had long been the recipient of the love of Khilafat, had come to Huzoor's office to tell Huzoor that he was leaving the Jamaat.

Thus, when Huzoor advised me to be calmer, I mentioned that incident to him and said that I could never have imagined that he had received such upsetting news just moments before.

Upon this, Huzoor remarked:
"I do not let such things affect me and always look forward because no matter what obstacles are placed in our way the Jamaat will continue to progress and we must continue with our duties. Thus, after receiving the news I took 30 seconds to myself and took a sip of water. Thereafter, I was completely fine and was ready to meet the Khuddam and did not give a second thought to the issue."

I remember when I heard this, I sat in silence amazed at Huzoor's composure and patience.

AN EMOTIONAL MEETING

In early June 2018, Ms. Rameez Abbas, an Assistant Professor at the National Defence University in Washington D.C. who teaches South Asian politics and Islam, amongst other things, had the opportunity to meet Huzoor at the Fazl Mosque.

Rameez sahiba, who had been researching about Ahmadiyyat for some time, asked Huzoor about the concept of leadership so she asked Huzoor specifically about what influenced his leadership as Khalifatul Masih.

Specifically, Rameez sahiba asked:
"In terms of your leadership, I am interested to know how the leadership of the Third Khalifa, Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad[rh] and the Fourth

Khalifa, Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad[rh] have influenced your leadership during the current era?"

In response, Huzoor said:

"Neither the leadership of Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad[rh] or Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad[rh] influences my leadership, rather it is the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadianas who governs and influences what I say and do."

"I am the Khalifatul Masih, as were my predecessors Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad[rh] and Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad[rh] and so just as they followed the Promised Messiah[as] in all matters and sought to fulfil his mission, so do I. Every Khalifa follows the guidance of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad[as] of Qadian because we are his successors"

Huzoor continued:

"Whilst our objectives and goals are exactly the same, it is true that each Khalifa has his personal style and additionally the contemporary issues of each era play a role in determining some of the things that the Khalifa focuses upon. Yet the basic concept of leadership and what we preach to the world is exactly the same and always will be."

Explaining a particular focus of his Khilafat so far, Huzoor said:

"In this era, the lack of peace and security in the world has been the most pressing issue and so my focus has been on trying to harness peace in the world. Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad[rh] and Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad[rh] also placed emphasis on the need for peace but perhaps not as much as me because there were other issues of greater concern during their respective eras and so they focused their efforts on those."

As Huzoor paused,
Rameez sahiba interjected and said:

"I recently read an article by your respected wife, Hazrat Amatul Sabooh Begum, in which she said that you were very close to Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad[rh] and so I assume that he will have been a big influence upon your life?"

In response, Huzoor said:

"When I took the Bai'at of the Khulafa who preceded me it meant that I had sold myself. Bai'at literally means in Arabic to 'sell yourself' and when you sell yourself it means that you no longer control your own destiny and that your life is in the hands of someone else. Thus, my relationship with the Khulafa who preceded me was exactly like this that I listened and obeyed them in every matter."

Huzoor continued:

"I was 15 when Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad[rh] was elected Khalifatul Masih and at the time of his demise, I was 32. During those 17 years, he guided me both when I was a student and later when I became a Waqf-e- Zindighi."

Huzoor further said:

"When I was a student the situation for Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan became increasingly fraught and dangerous. As a result, some people very close to me suggested that I should not go back to university because it was too dangerous. Yet at that time, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III[rh] told me not to be scared and instructed me to go to and attend the classes.

"Hence, perhaps the first great lesson he personally gave me was to instil courage and bravery in me. Where others were telling me that I would be beaten and mercilessly attacked if I went to university, my Khalifa told me to disregard any fear and to not let the conditions cower me and stop me from attending my classes."

After narrating this incident, Huzoor also mentioned that the Vice Chancellor of the University later stopped Ahmadis from coming to the University until conditions improved.

Nonetheless, Huzoor never forgot the lesson that Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III[rh] had taught him.

Huzoor said:

"When I became a Waqf-e-Zindighi, Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad[rh] instructed me to go to Ghana and he said that I should set the highest moral standards and set the best example for others to observe and learn from. That was his sole instruction to me as I set off for my new life. I was very fortunate that during my time in Ghana, Huzoor visited the country and so I was able to watch him very closely and to learn from his personal example. I used to observe him and see how he acted and how he spoke and it was a great blessing for me to see him at such close quarters."

Huzoor continued:

"Thereafter, the Fourth Khalifa, Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad[rh] was elected in 1982. Of course, there was a close familial relationship between us, as he was my uncle and I had grown up with him and had a close personal relationship with him from before his Khilafat. In fact, to some degree there was frankness between us but as soon as he was elected as Khalifatul Masih our relationship changed. It was as though a barrier had appeared, whereby the frankness from my side was converted into a complete and utter respect for him as my spiritual leader."

Describing vividly his complete love and respect for Khilafat, Huzoor said:

"In fact, in my heart I was determined to be his most obedient follower and vowed that no matter what I would listen and obey everything that he desired from me. I was determined that more than anyone else, I would be the one who would honour and obey him at all times. This was the way I had been brought up by my parents and their influence upon me has lasted a lifetime."

As I listened to Huzoor's words, I felt a shiver run down my spine. I thought of how he had pledged to be the most obedient follower of Khalifatul Masih IVrh and how he fulfilled this pledge in every possible way so that when the time came, Allah the Almighty chose him as Khalifatul Masih V after the demise of Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad[rh].

I also reflected upon Huzoor's recollections of the period of Khilafat of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III[rh] and how he had instilled courage and fortitude within Huzoor by instructing him to go to University, even as others said that it was too dangerous. And how Allah the Almighty had blessed that seed planted by Khalifatul Masih III[rh].

Later, I mentioned to Huzoor that I had not heard before that some people had advised him not to go to university in Pakistan.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

"Yes, even my father (Hazrat Mirza Mansoor Ahmad) was worried and initially did not want me to go. However, our home training was always that once the Khalifa has made a decision we must follow and obey it. Saboohi (Huzoor's respected wife) also tells of how in her home her parents instructed her and her siblings that if they ever said anything that was contradictory to what the Khalifa-Waqt has said then their children should disregard their parents and only follow what the Khalifa had said. This was the atmosphere in which we were raised." ■

Peace of Mind

"Every individual is seen asking this question, 'How can we attain peace of mind?' The fact is that peace of mind can be attained through one of two ways; either every desire that is in the heart is fulfilled, or all futile and vain desires are removed from the heart and only those desires remain that are good and can be fulfilled. The Holy Quran says that God created humans so that they could adopt the attributes of God within themselves. Then, He says, those who truly make efforts in this way, God is responsible for them to achieve that purpose. In other words, the Holy Quran takes the responsibility of giving peace of mind."

(Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, Tafsir-e-Kabir, Vol. 7, p. 698)

NEW ZEALAND
A LAND OF GEOTHERMAL WONDERS

Tasleem Ahmad

Tasleem Ahmad is a high school student from Auckland, New Zealand. There, he has been involved with the Al-Akseer newsletter, written for the Sultan-ul-Qalam blog, and co-presented Jalsa Salana 2018 with MTA New Zealand. He also reached the finals of the 2017 MTA Face2Face competition. He is a keen lacrosse player, and practices horse riding and swimming on a regular basis. He plans to continue his work for the Jamaat in the future.

In the Holy Quran, Hadith and the literature of the Jamaat, we are constantly reminded that as Muslims, we should seek not only religious wisdom, but also secular knowledge. As a result, every year, New Zealand Waqifeen-e-Nau take a trip to places all around New Zealand, with the purpose of expanding their horizons and learning more about the world around them.

This year on 3 March 2018, 17 Waqifeen-e-Nau, under the supervision of eight adults, travelled to an area of New Zealand especially renowned for its geothermal activity – Te Puia in Rotorua, in the central North Island.

After writing a letter to Hazrat Khalifatul Masihaa requesting prayers and after giving sadqa, the group departed in the morning from the mosque. The first stop was at the Hamilton Gardens to rendezvous with Waqifeen from Hamilton Jamaat, and from there the group travelled south to Rotorua. When choosing a location for the trip, this was a firm favourite, as during Huzoor's 2013 tour of New Zealand, he visited this location.

New Zealand is on an active fault line – a natural boundary between tectonic plates. These areas are characterised by features such as volcanoes, earthquakes and geothermal activity. The area of Te Puia is a hotspot for such geothermal features – but it is also a very significant place when it comes to the history of the indigenous Maori tribes.

A notable feature of Te Puia is the replica of a Maori village, to showcase what life may have been like before the arrival of the first European colonists in the late 1700s. Maori building techniques are very dependent on the land, with natural components such as flax, wood and grass being used for construction. Maori buildings are often ornately and distinctively carved with depictions of Maori legends, and other significant figures.

This dependence on the land is further emphasised through Maori culture; respect for nature and the land is a significant part of their beliefs and practices.

Today, one can visit and enjoy the replica village, but the star attraction is the geothermal activity. Geysers and mud pools are especially numerous in this area.

Below is some information about a few of the geothermal wonders that our country is gifted with.

POHUTU GEYSER

Pohutu means "constant splashing" in Maori – a fitting name, as it is the most reliable geyser on earth, with impressively consistent eruptions. These eruptions can last from a few minutes to much, much longer; Pohutu once erupted for 250 days continuously. However, it was, at one point, in danger of becoming dormant – a fate that befell some other geysers – due to geo-thermal energy being taken from the area. The geyser is still active though, due to the energy tapping programme being halted; it now erupts once or twice an hour, with eruptions spraying water up to thirty metres high.

PURAPURAWHETU MUD POOL

This pool is a dark colour for mud – this is due to the presence of black sulphur (sulphur is extremely common in geothermal areas). The pool's name means "star dust" – a name given because the bubbles of mud resemble a pattern of stars.

GEOTHERMAL HOT POOLS

For hundreds of years, the Maori have used hot pools and mud pools for cooking, bathing, and the preparation of flax. The many minerals present in the pools are renowned for being beneficial for the skin – but not for the nose, as the entire Te Puia area smells like Sulphur! An interesting use for these pools is a cooking method called Ingo. This involves placing food in woven flax baskets into the hot pools. The food is cooked by the heat and steam, and infused with a unique flavor.

While at Te Puia, it is also possible to see the kiwi – the national icon of New Zealand. In fact, "kiwi" is also the colloquial term for New Zealanders. In appearance, the kiwi is a nocturnal, flightless bird, with a rounded body and long beak. There are five species - Brown kiwi, Tokoeka, Rowi,

Great Spotted Kiwi, and Little Spotted Kiwi. While there used to be upwards of 12 million kiwis, there are now less than 100,000, placing it on the endangered list. At Te Puia, it is possible to view the kiwi in a dark enclosure simulating its natural habitat.

To the Maori, the kiwi was a special bird – its feathers were made into cloaks that were worn only by chiefs, and it was believed that the kiwi was the bird of Tanemahuta, the Maori forest god. Interestingly, kiwi were also steamed in a hangi – a traditional Maori underground earth oven – and eaten.

The final point of interest for our Waqf-e-Nau trip was Lake Rotorua. With an area of 79.8 km2 and an average depth of ten metres, this lake is a crater lake formed 240,000 years ago when the magma chamber of a large volcano collapsed after an eruption. Again, it has a high sulphur content just like the nearby Te Puia valley, making the waters a slight yellow-green colour. A spot Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V[aba] and his entourage enjoyed on their 2013 tour is here as well, overlooking the lake.

The volcano that caused the creation of Lake Rotorua, however, is still there. In fact, the entire Roturua area is on top of a supervolcano – one that has been inactive for an unusually long period of time. ■

Can one succumb to Shirk in love for Khilafat?

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V[aba] addressed an issue to do with love for Khilafat and Shirk (associating partners with Allah) and said:

"Someone said to me that people give such a high status to Khilafat and the Khalifa of the time, to the extent that they have reached the stage of Shirk [associating partners with Allah]. It should be clear that the Promised Messiah[as] came in servitude to the Holy Prophetsa in order to eradicate Shirk from the world. Hence, it is impossible that his true Khilafat could increase or encourage any form of Shirk.

"The fundamental task of Khilafat is to eradicate Shirk, establish the unity of God and to fulfil and complete the mission for which the Promised Messiah[as] was commissioned. If a person forms this opinion having seen another person meet the Khalifa with honour and respect, then instead of judging, they ought to reflect over whether or not he is thinking ill of another person. Therefore, if this is in fact the case, those who think ill of others should refrain from doing so. However, if someone has truly reached the stage where he is giving others the impression that he is, God forbid, elevating the status of the Khalifa to a form of Shirk, then he should do Istighfar and also be cautious.

"I never desire for this and nor have I ever done so. In the same way, no past Khalifa, neither any Khalifa in the future – God Willing – will ever desire for their own personality to be given importance. Indeed, it is the responsibility of the Khalifa of the time to establish the respect and honour for Khilafat. As it is his duty, he will continue to do so. Moreover, he will do so because according to the promises of Allah the Exalted and the prophecy of the Holy Prophetsa, the unity of God was to be spread throughout the world through Khilafat and at the same time, Shirk was to be eradicated from the world through Khilafat.

"Thus, some weak-minded people, who develop these thoughts as a result of a lack of tarbiyat [moral and spiritual training], should erase these thoughts from their minds."

(Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih V[aba], Friday Sermon, delivered from Baitur Rahman Mosque, Silver Spring, Maryland, USA on 2 November 2018)

THE NOBLE CHARACTER OF THE FOUNDER OF ISLAM

Al Fazl (Khatam-un-Nabiyyin Number), 31 May 1929
Reverend Ghulam Masih
Former Editor of Nur Afshan newspaper
(Translated by Jalees Ahmad, UK)

Bearing in mind the current conduct of the Christians [upon this topic] and that I myself am a Christian, it cannot be considered that I, in any aspect, would exaggerate in portraying the noble character of Prophet Muhammad[sa]; or that I would add anything new to the high status of Prophet Muhammad which the knowledgeable Companions themselves did not know. Having said that, an unbiased opinion can only be given by a Christian who has broadly studied Islamic literature.

FROM START TO END

The Prophet was brought up in the land of Arabia as an orphan and faced a great deal of poverty. Though he belonged to a sincere family of the Quraish, yet, in comparison to the honourable families, he was among the less privileged.

Prophet Muhammad did not inherit any property from his family, nor did he leave behind any worldly wealth for his progeny. This is a very strange reality that he came into the world in a poor family and as an orphan, in his 23 years of prophethood his followers became the custodians of Arabia, but he did not bequeath even a penny for his progeny. I shall now move on to state below some examples of the noble character of the Prophet Muhammad found between the start and end of his life.

TITLES

The character of the Prophet can be seen in the names and titles given to him. The most eminent names are Muhammad [praised], Shahid [witness], Nazir [warner], Bashir [conveyer of good news] and Muhammad Rasulullah [Muhammad, the messenger of Allah]. It is astonishing, and one can only wonder, that the titles, Leader, Leader of the Quraish, Leader of Arabia, Conqueror of Arabia, King of Arabia etc. are not found.

There is no doubt that the history of Islam has recorded the Prophet's life, life services, victories, battles, bravery and courage in great detail, and it is evident that before his demise, he became the leader of the whole of Arabia. Be that as it may, in the history of Islam, we do not find any mention of him ascending to a throne, wearing extravagant clothes, any coronation event, or that the Prophet advised his followers to build a grand palace in his name. Only on one occasion, in the entire history of Islam, do we find a mention of a building being constructed in his life, and that too a house of God – Masjid-e-Nabawi. After reading this all, does this not greatly astonish one?

DISLIKES

During the time of the Prophet, historians have painted a dark picture regarding the propensities, traditions, customs and beliefs of the leaders of Arabia. They have mentioned in extensive detail the consumption of alcohol, gambling, taking pride in family lineage, their disastrous selfish behaviour, their cruelty and evil towards slaves, their brutality towards widows, orphans and the poor, and being engrossed in dancing and hypocrisy. But what is most extraordinary is that even in times of joy, freedom from worries, triumph and prosperity, history never mentions the Prophet indulging in the vain customs of the Arabs. On the contrary, it describes him as being opposed to such abominations that were adornments and beautiful concepts among the influential people of the area.

STEADFASTNESS IN TIMES OF DIFFICULTY

History tells us that the Prophet came with the message of one God. He [God] alone was proof of his truthfulness and the means of his strength. His people, who were idol worshipers, in defence of their own religion, formed an iron-clad wall. For almost 13 years the people of Mecca inflicted harm and pain upon the Prophet, but his belief never wavered; his persistence saw no weakness; his passion never diminished, and his steadfastness never fluttered. Eventually, the entire Arabia learnt the reality of the Prophet's steadfastness and patience, and from all sides, people felt compelled to believe in his message. Thus, after reading about his steadfastness, passion and service for Islam, can one question his nobility and piety?

WORSHIP AND PIETY

His worship and piety bear great significance in his life. On taking a glance at the Prophet's life, we can clearly see that the victory he attained was

not due to his Companions, but was a result of his prayers and supplications. It is evident from his example of praying five times (sometimes seven times [including Tahajud and Ishraq prayers]) daily that he had firm faith in God, through which he attained the strength which was necessary. This is something that no just person deny.

HIS SUPPORT FOR THE HELPLESS

The Prophet was a father figure for the helpless. Mercy and compassion flowed within his character. He would generally help the oppressed and underprivileged, and he would especially support the slaves. He was a guardian and protector for them. He would always be ready to cripple the efforts of those who caused them distress. In short, the Prophet strived to do the deeds he knew to be good for himself and his followers, and refrained from what he felt was bad.

TRUTH REMAINED VICTORIOUS

The Prophets character was completely pure. This was so that the worship and glorification of the One God be established in the world, proving true in the 23-year period of his religious duties. His conduct had such an impact on the people of Arabia, which, to date, has affected 240 million people [in 1929]. He had the power and capability of eliminating the hypocrisy and infidelity among the Arabs and including them in the brotherhood of Islam. It is no exaggeration on my part to say that the entire nation of Arabia was not able, nor did they have the strength to compete against the effect of the Prophet's pure character. All the opponents tried, but the final victory belonged to the Prophet.

THE POWER OF TRUTH

Prophets Abraham, Moses, Jesus and the prophets of Bani Israil all achieved success by remaining truthful and honest. Likewise, the Prophet Muhammad, also attained victory, as stated above, by following the same principles. After all the prophets, the Prophet Muhammad, who was from among the progeny of Prophet Abraham, proved through his character that the principle "might is right" is completely false and the principle of honesty and truth is right. Can we Christians and Muslims uphold the same values? If only we could follow this too!

(This English rendering was included in Al Hakam on 23 November 2018)

THE ISLAMIC WAY OF CELEBRATING THE NEW YEAR

Self Reflection

Did we keep ourselves away from such events that lead to ill thoughts?
Did we safeguarded ourselves against all forms of harm?
Did we protect ourselves from every kind of mischief?
Did we safeguard ourselves against all forms of disorder?
Did we protect ourselves against deceitful acts?
Did we regularly offer Salah five times a day during the last year?
Did we offer the Tahajud prayer?
Did we try to be regular in sending Durood (invoke blessings) upon the Holy Prophet[sws]?
Did we seek forgiveness from Allah profusely? disobedient
Did we try to achieve the high standards of good manners?
Did you all supplicate and reminded your children of being obedient to the Promised Messiah[as]?
Did we reach our standard of obedience with the Promised Messiah (Peace be on Him) to such an extent that all other relations become secondary?
Did we pray to remain loyal and obedient to the institution of Khilafat?
Did we pray regularly for the Khalifa and the Jama'at?
Did all the parents remind their children about the importance of Khilafat and guided them to remain loyal to it?

(By Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih V[aba], Friday Sermon, delivered from Baitul Futuh, on December 30th 2016)

Waqf-e-Nau UK Spain Trip 2018

In light of Huzoor[aba] instructions on the occasion of the National Waqf-e-Nau Ijtema 2018 in which Hazrat Amirul Momineen[aba] said:

"In terms of Tabligh from a young age Waqifeen-e-Nau should have the habit of spreading the message of Islam. Thus at weekends or during holidays you should do Tabligh and play your role in defending Islam from the false allegations that are levelled against it. Both the Jama'at and Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya host Tabligh functions and events and so you should offer your services and try to help as much as possible."

On the morning of 24 October 2018, 23 Waqifeen-e-Nau gathered at Fazal Mosque to embark on a historical trip to Southern Spain. After being briefed about the importance of this trip, the group set off to London Stansted Airport.

Upon arrival at Malaga Airport, they were welcomed by the Missionary Respected Qaisar Mahmood Malik Sahib who took the group to Masjid Basharat, Pedro Abad.

Before departing, one of the Waqifeen-e-Nau, Aosaf Ahmad Basra Sahib said: "I wanted to go on this trip because it is a trip organised by the Jamaat and as a Waqf-e-Nau I want to be a part of a group that is going for the soul purpose of experiencing Spain with the sprit which the Jama'at has in terms of brotherhood. And for me it is a blessed trip not like any other trips. It is a trip where I can go and spread the message of Islam and learn from other Waqifeen-e-Nau as well as from the Jamaat. And as guest of the Jamaat it is an honour for me to go. And the aim for me for this trip is to make myself a better Ahmadi, a better Waqf-e-Nau and to realise what I can do in the world in terms of my duty and my obligations as an Ahmadi."

The Waqifeen-e-Nau started each day by offering the Tahajjud and Fajr prayer. After having breakfast, they would visit different historical sites according to their timetable. The trip started with the city of Seville where they began to see the Cathedral. It was originally built by Muslims early during the Islamic empire as the main Mosque of Seville which over time has become one of the largest churches. From there, they moved on to see the Real Alcazar which is the King's palace.

Each day after visiting the respected heritage sites, they would spend time doing Tabligh by distributing leaflets to the public and involving in one to one discussions.

On the third day, the group visited the Great Mosque of Cordoba which at one time was the largest covered Mosque in the world. A Waqf-e-Nau Faran Ahmad Sahib described his observations in the following words:

"I have really enjoyed looking at the calligraphy especially the Arabic writing and have learnt that it was once made by the Muslims."

Medina Azahara

Another Waqf-e-Nau Kaleem Ahmad Sahib commented whilst visiting "Medina Azahara" (ruins of a vast, fortified Moorish medieval palace-city):

"I have been here before but have not seen this place, so it is a different experience a unique on its own especially enjoying the time with all the brothers."

Another important aspect worth mentioning is that the Waqifeen-e-Nau also had the chance to go and pray at the grave of Respected Karam Ilahi Zafar Sahib, who was one the first missionaries in Spain.

Granada

One of the sites Waqifeen-e-Nau managed to visit was Alhambra which is a palace and fortress complex located in Granada. Seeing the site, a Waqf-e-Nau Ziaullah Ehsan Sahib expressed his emotions in the following words:

"Coming here, a person feels two profound emotions. One is a sense of great pride, witnessing how great and eminent the status of the Islamic Empire once was. However, alongside one also feels remorse and grief at how this once great Kingdom of Muslims in Spain is no longer there."

He also said:

"Especially since the main purpose of our visit is the propagation of Islam, we are distributing flyers and leaflets. There is a great need for people to continue come here and spread the message of Islam, Ahmadiyya."

Gibraltar

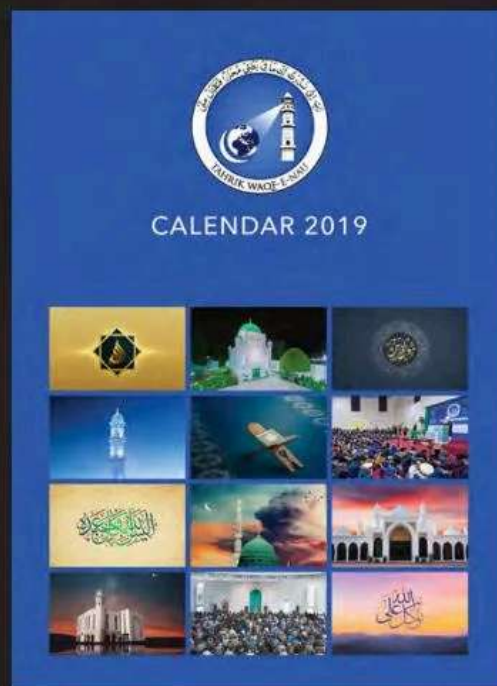
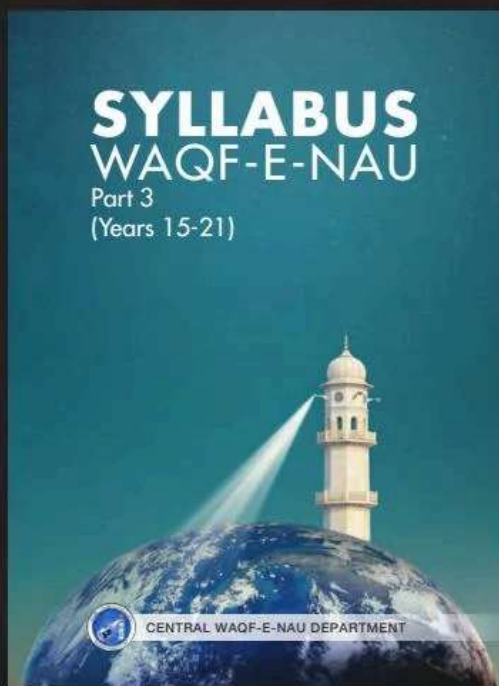
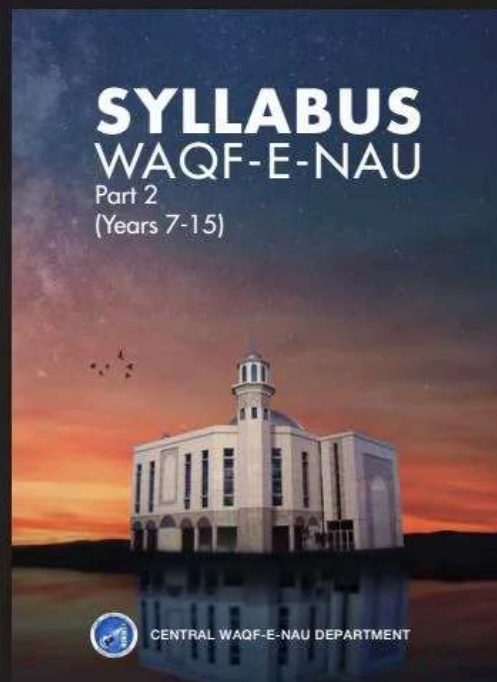
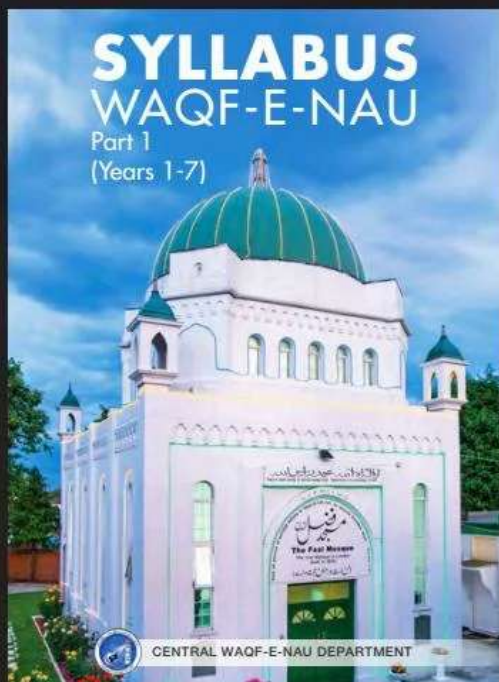
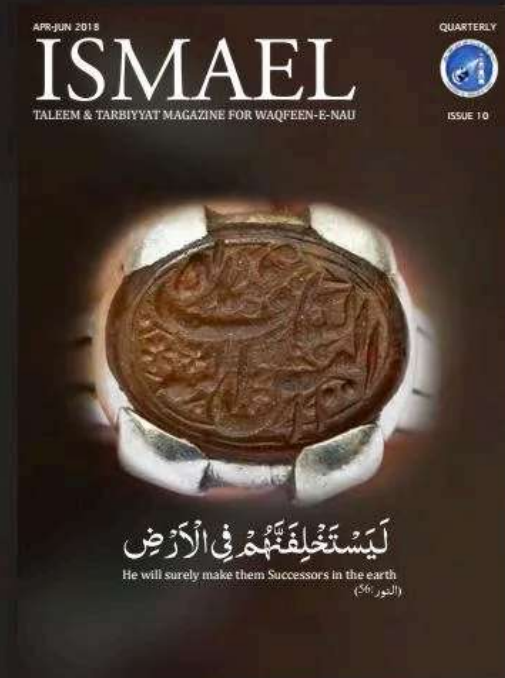
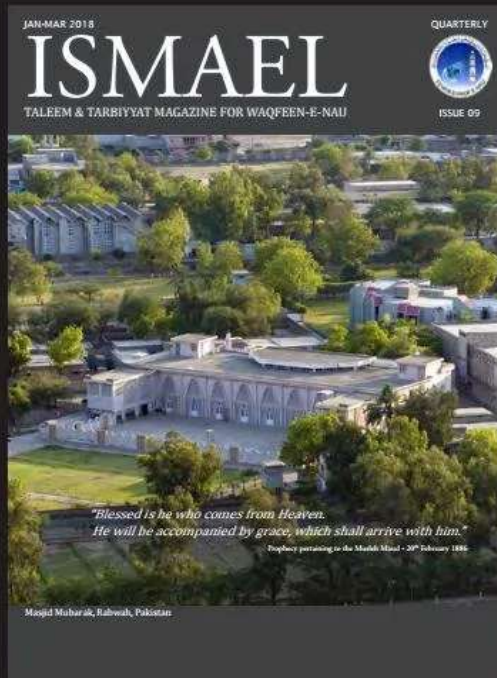
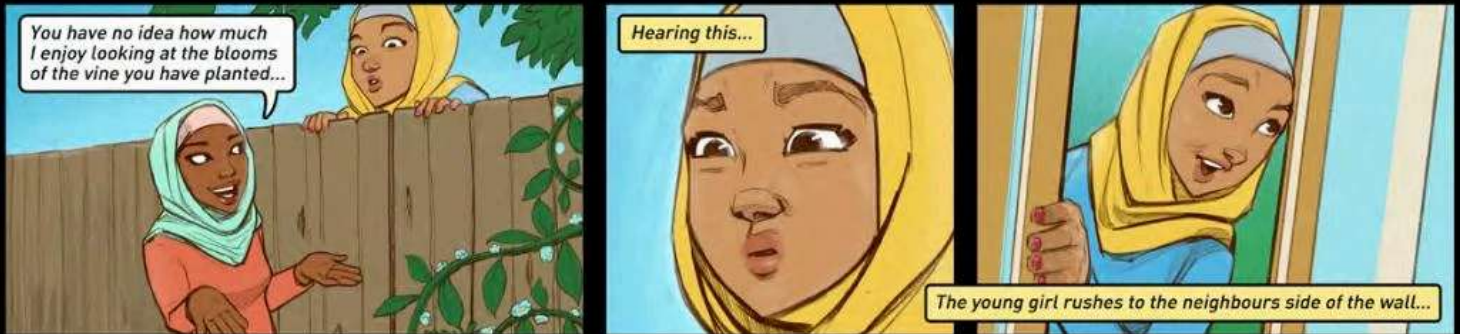
Apart from that, Waqifeen-e-Nau also had the opportunity to visit Gibraltar and the city of Malaga.

A distinctive part of this trip was the sitting with Respected Ameer Sahib in which he explained to us the history of Islam and Ahmadiyya in Spain.

Waqifeen-e-Nau offered all their prayers in congregation, 11 Waqifeen-e-Nau completed reading the book of the Promised Messiah (as) Noah's Ark during this trip and every Waqf-e-Nau partook in Tabligh through distributing leaflets. In total, 3500 leaflets were distributed from the 24 October to 31 October 2018.

This trip was organised by the Department of Waqf-e-Nau in Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya, UK.

Musharaf Ahmed
Muavin Sadr, Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya UK

WAQF-E-NAU PUBLICATIONS 2018

MORALS
THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL
A young woman inherited a beautiful garden from her grandmother.
She also loved gardening and was very proud of her garden.
One day, she saw a very beautiful plant in a catalogue
...and wanted to have it for her garden.
She ordered it and planted it at the base of the stonewall in her garden...
...She took great care of the plant.
which grew quickly...
...and had vibrant green leaves on it.
Months passed...
but not a single flower bloomed on the tree...

MORAL OF THE STORY:

Just because you cannot see the good results of your efforts does not mean that it bore no fruit.

THE
REVIEW
OF RELIGIONS